

Questions Still Raised On JFK Assassination

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David Williams was sitting on a folding chair near the front of the auditorium at the Camden campus of Rutgers University, musing about how many people might attend his lecture.

"I guess a couple hundred would be a good turnout," he said softly. "This is a commuter college and it's a weekday night. I don't expect too large a crowd."

But less than 30 minutes later, 600 persons were packed in. Extra chairs were unfolded. Several persons were sitting on the floor as Williams begins his talk on a subject that has intrigued Americans for more than a decade: the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Williams' 90-minute presentation, coupled with a movie and slides of photographs and drawings related to the assassination, is intended to raise questions about the Warren Commission's finding that Lee Harvey Oswald was a lone assassin. The program does not postulate an alternative theory. Rather, Williams offers several possibilities for the audience to consider.

Throughout the session, the audience, which includes about 75 older persons mixed in among the students, listens attentively and quietly. It is the type of atmosphere most professors long for, but seldom have.

"I can't believe this turn-

out," offers 21-year-old Brian Smith, the Rutgers student body president. "We had Gerald terHorst (President Ford's former press secretary) here recently and maybe half this number turned out."

But for Williams, the 24-year-old former religion major from Wesleyan College, surprising turnouts and this type of attention are what he and his associates have become accustomed to since they formed the "assassination Information Bureau" in Cambridge, Mass., last year.

Since then, Williams says, they have traveled about the country giving more than 200 lectures in 40 states, mostly to college audiences.

"I think Watergate has had a lot to do with reviving interest," Williams says. "Not only in the assassination, but in conspiracies in general. Of course, this month, there is always more interest."

This Friday will mark 11 years to the day since Kennedy was murdered in a Dallas motorcade. And for most of the students who attend these lectures, memories of that day can be little more than a blur.

Since most of them were under 10 years of age then, their recollections likely come more from what they've learned during the controversial years that have followed, than from what they actually recall from that day.

But yet they come, curious to learn more. And they leave fascinated — even frightened — by what they've heard.

"I think it's still a controversial subject," says student leader Smith. "That's why we had this. I came here believing Oswald acted alone; that's what I'd always heard. But now, well, I'm scared to death."

Williams, a tall, lanky son of a minister, was 13 at the time John Kennedy was killed. He never considered himself an "assassination nut" before last year, although he had read a few books critical of the Warren Commission. But some friends of his who had been following the subject got him interested and his organization was formed.

"The more I read, the more I learned, the greater a sense of outrage I had," Williams says.

When Williams and his partners started out, they would take turns traveling to their engagements, which are mostly before college audiences.

But in recent months, their Boston booking agent has received so many dates that the group has divided in two.

Williams admits that he and his group are making money from their crusade. He says they can realize about \$500, before expenses, from each speaking engagement. Often they give more than one lecture in a day.